Sketches of Ontario: Susanna Moodie's *Life in the Clearing versus the Bush*

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［要約］

スザンナ・ムーディは前作 *Roughing It in the Bush* の続編として *Life in the Clearing versus the Bush* を 1853 年に執筆した。この作品は前作同様に素描集であるが、本作ではカナダの成長しつつあるオンタリオ州の町における生活に焦点が当てられている。本作は一方で 19 世紀の植民地カナダの人々や場所を描写しているが、精読すると、願望充足という前作とのテーマの一貫性が明らかになる。若かった時に暮らしていたイングランドへの回帰が、彼女のカナダやイングランドについての解釈を特徴づけている。本作における語りには単なる街の生活描写以上のもの、すなわちミシェル・フーコーが論じた学校や精神病院や刑務所といった「支配の空間（spaces of domination）」のような文明化するテクノロジーとともにもたらされるユートピアへの処方が表されているのである。ムーディの語りによれば、これらの構造物のみが、ムーディ自身のように訓練された自制心による無限の規制のもとに生きる個人、完璧な社会の中へ統合され得る市民をつくり出すことができる。*Life in the Clearing versus the Bush* は結局のところ解答のないコメディであって、すべてのユートピアと同様に、どんなに良い意図が込められていようとも実現され得ないものである。それにもかかわらず、ムーディは喜劇的要素や喜劇的登場人物を用いており、本論文ではそれらが前述のテーマにどのように貢献しているか検討する。

1. Introduction

Based on the success of her 1852 book *Roughing It in the Bush, or Life in Canada* (*Roughing It* hereafter), Susanna Moodie's publisher commissioned her to write a follow up, one that could build on the English reading public's interest in the 'exotic' colony of Canada:

> If you could render your picture of the state of society in the large towns and cities of Canada, interesting to the idle reader, at the same time you make it informing to those who are looking for facts it would be acceptable...it might form a good work as pendant to "Roughing It in the Bush" (Bentely, cited in Shields 335).

Mrs. Moodie happily complied, relying on income generated from her writing to keep her cupboards stocked with, as she put it, 'tea and butter'. The resulting book, *Life in the Clearing versus the Bush* (*Clearing* hereafter) was not as successful as its precursor, but remains an important social and literary document in its own right. Susanna Moodie was not so much a literary, creative writer as a thematic one who used the creative components of literature – narrative, character, conflict – to support her themes, and it is this feature that we will focus on in this article.

Susanna Moodie never recovered from having to leave England for Canada and this melancholy manifests itself in her work as wish-fulfillment narrative. Although she never would return to England, her desire was to see the best of England established in Canada. The narrative thread that Moodie uses to tie *Clearing's* sketches together is a long-anticipated journey from her home in Belleville on the shores of lake Ontario to Niagara Falls. To see the falls before she died was one of Moodie's lifelong dreams, and after twenty years' wait she was able to make the journey. Moodie travels by steamboat around the shores of Lake Ontario, using the stops as occasions for reflective writing on the developments in Canada during her two decades there. However, *Clearing* is no more a story about a trip to Niagara Falls than *Heart of Darkness* is about river boating in Africa. The real story in *Clearing* is written not by Moodie the traveller, but by Moodie the moralistic social critic. Moodie's moral outlook was typical of the Christian Victorian era as

described in Herke (92). The actual Canada she describes is a land of abundance but falls short of potential, as did her homeland of England. Moodie sees the rising British Empire as proof of the superior character of the British people, which in turn is due to a superior moral education (*Clearing* 84). In resource-rich Canada she dreams of a utopia in which people with the proper character will be created through power of surveillance and punishment: public education, imprisonment and rehabilitation and the asylum. Moodie is convinced that a plague curses the land. It is contagious, and like all plagues, if left unchecked it would in short order undermine society. To create the citizen purified of contagion is her great theme throughout both the books.

In order to find the source of the plague we have to return to Moodie's arrival in Canada as recorded in the opening pages of *Roughing It.* Moodie describes quarantined Irish and Scottish immigrants she meets on Grosse Isle, an island near Montreal that served as an immigration station for ships entering Canada. "The confusion of Babel was among them" (*Roughing It* 20). Moodie here alludes to the well-known story of Babel in the book of Genesis, in which humans are cursed for aspiring to be like god.

This choice of metaphor is significant. These immigrants were quarantined in an effort to contain a cholera epidemic. A deadly plague was actually present among them and many would die of this 'curse'. The bible is filled with stories of prideful humans striving – and usually failing – against god. Railing against impropriety is Moodie's raison d'etre, and nothing is more corrupting than pride. She continues the description of the quarantined:

> The *vicious*, *uneducated barbarians* who form the surplus of over-populous European countries, are far behind the wild man [indigenous peoples] in delicacy of feeling or natural courtesy. The people who covered the island appeared *perfectly destitute of shame, or even a sense of common decency*. Many were almost naked, still more but partially clothed. *We turned in disgust from the revolting scene*...[italics mine] (*Roughing It* 20).

The passage is filled with negatively evaluative language. Her attitude towards those who fail to live to the appropriate standard – Moodie's standard – are portrayed as almost sub-human. Moodie's real concern is not the containment of the cholera epidemic, but a more sinister plague:

> And here I must observe that our passengers, who were chiefly honest Scotch labourers and mechanics from the vicinity of Edinburgh, and who while on board ship had conducted themselves with the greatest propriety, and appeared the most quiet, orderly set of people in the world, *no sooner set foot upon the island than they became infected by the same spirit of insubordination and misrule, and were just as insolent and noisy as the rest*. [emphasis added] (*Roughing It* 20)

And here is the crux of the matter. Susanna Moodie believes that she – and people like her – embody good citizenship and those who do not are judged as carrying some kind of infectious plague. The quarantine procedures are keeping the immigrants from the native population, but as Moodie points out, they are still infecting each other with cholera and worse, insubordination. The people quarantined on Grosse Isle, "have no shame – are under no restraint – nobody knows them here, and they think they can speak and act as they please" (*Roughing It* 21).

Moodie uses the platform of society sketches to advance her true agenda of outlining the nature and means of ideal citizenship, the inculcation of societal norms, and other facets of the civilizing process. This paper will describe the background to Moodie's ideology and show the literary techniques she employs to outline her utopia and the means of creating the appropriate citizenry.

2. Before the Clearing

Clearing differs from its predecessor in a number of ways. *Roughing It* was a plain warning to prospective genteel English immigrants about the pioneer reality in 19th century Ontario, describing a way of life that was more liable to destroy a family than rejuvenate it. The book is a tale of suffering and survival, and ends with the Moodie family escaping the wilderness to take up a government post in town. Thus

redeemed, *Clearing* takes up the narrative as it moves from the problem of survival in the wilderness to the question of citizenship in society. The wilderness wandering exile of *Roughing It* united the narrative in a melodramatic, compelling way, connecting with the reader sympathies through the pathos and the undeserved suffering of Saint Susanna. Although Moodie uses the same sketch format in *Clearing*, it lacks the cohesion of *Roughing It.* In place of pathos there is politics, which can attract or repulse depending on one's own ideology, whereas characters who suffer unjustly – as Moodie presented herself – draw reader sympathy almost reflexively.

The bush is wild and untamed, a metaphor for the many of the people who tried to make a home there. Interestingly, Moodie does not contrast the bush with the city, but the clearing. When we think of the opposite of the wild the first thing that comes to mind is civilization: towns, buildings, roads, etc. But this is not what we find in the sequel to *Roughing It*. The clearing is somewhere between the bush and civilization; it illustrates, for Moodie, a country and a people who are very much a work in progress. Many residents of Canada still fall short of her moral standard, thereby holding back the country itself from becoming a utopia. Moodie does show us in more concrete terms how this utopia will be realized. Citizens will be just to each other because they are formed to behave that way through social norming apparatuses: education through public schools, and punishment and reform when the former fails. These are the architectures, the concrete manifestations of power and civilization, that will bring the clearing into modernity. In moving from the bush to the clearing Moodie has also transformed: from the powerless to an agent of power, from the judged to the judge.

3. Political Situation in Canada

The Moodies arrived in the British colony of Canada in 1832 in the middle of a series of crises for the colonial government. Thousands of people were dying – many of them recent immigrants – in a cholera epidemic. They had been quarantined upon arrival on Grosse Isle near Montreal on government order. The colonial government had also been resisting pressure by opposition politicians who wanted more direct representation and accountability, producing feelings that the British government was secretly trying to erode French political influence (Bothwell

181-82). Canada at this time was, as one governor general described, “two nations warring in the bosom of a single state”. Angered by what was perceived as duplicitous behaviour by the colonial government, opposition parties ramped up dissident action, eventually taking to the streets in protest and attempting to organize a revolt. The result was more riot than revolution, and the colonial government responded with an iron fist, deploying the military along with loyal local militia who scattered the protesters, and looted and burned French business areas. French Canadian leaders were killed, arrested, or fled to the United States.

The government suppression of the rebellion in 1837 was an abject lesson in the limits of individual or minority rights, particularly when they threatened the status quo. Importantly, Susanna Moodie’s family benefitted a great deal from the insurrection and the government response. Moodie herself published loyalist poems that were distributed throughout the colony (*Roughing It* 278-280). Her husband, British ex-military, responded to the government call for loyalists and served in the militia with distinction. It was primarily due to this loyal service that Lt. Moodie was offered the post of sheriff which allowed the family to leave their poverty-stricken pioneer existence and begin a new life in the relatively developed town of Belleville, Ontario. Moodie was released from the “green prison” of the wilderness and, true to her Christian worldview, interpreted the situation as a miraculous, hand-of-god event. It was a powerful reaffirmation of Moodie’s belief in the justness of political England as well. Loyalty is rewarded; dissent is punished. As she describes in the chapter *Free Schools*, it is in the state’s (or society's) best interest to produce citizens who are trained in many things, but questioning authority is not among them. The problem is how to construct a society that produces and maintains such “just” citizens, that is those who maintain existing class structures. Moodie attempts to answer this throughout *Clearing.*

It is helpful at this point to recall the scene on Grosse Isle upon the Moodie’s arrival in Canada. At that time, the government response to the cholera epidemic created almost as many problems as it solved. Indeed the necessary infrastructure – civilization – was not yet in place to handle the crisis. Not only that but the immigrants themselves behaved without restraint because they had never been civilized internally. The government largely failed to contain the plagues in 1832, but was successful against the 1837 rebellion with a violent display of absolute

power. What shape would future reactions against these sorts of plagues take?

4. Ends: Ideologies

Moodie is concerned with the clearing or civilizing of Canadian society in a way that will still rebellion before it ever begins, and ensure a society that can care for all of its members in a way that Britain, despite its emergence as world power, never could. The Moodie family itself suffered from this lack and was forced into exile to the colonies. The quest to create a perfect society is as old as society itself, and in the next section we will examine some of the more influential works that seek the same goal.

Moodie has two main drives that inform her worldview. The first is to correct the defects in English society that brought about her family's (and thousands of others') exile. Moodie was a middle class bourgeois without capital and restricted by traditional attitudes and class structure from working for a living as the lower order proletariat did. The painful choice was exile or face extinction. The second problem that confronts Moodie is that Canada, while abundant in opportunity and sustenance, lacks those same social mechanisms that slowly evolved in England over a thousand years. The proletariat who arrived in Canada were able to work and acquire bourgeois trappings without being shaped by civilizing social mechanisms, and hence largely earned her scorn for being uncivilized. From Moodie's point of view both systems had serious shortcomings and she devoted lengthy passages in *Clearing* proposing solutions.

4.1 Republic

Susanna Moodie is not the first person to connect individual character with national character. Plato's *Republic* is constructed around an extended metaphor; namely, that there is a correspondence or symmetry between the elements of the human soul and elements of the city. The greatest evil, according to Plato, is discord, either in the soul or in the city, which amounts in the end to the same thing. The greatest good therefore is how to harmonize or calibrate the individual and society so as to prevent discord. The best city is the one that seeks to produce the highest type of

individual. Plato called this ideal city *Kallipolis* (“the beautiful city”). Plato was a teacher and not surprisingly he believed that the surest way to produce the best individual was through education. In fact, according to Plato, the highest duty of society is the education of its citizens (Bloom 85).

Education’s primary goal is to create citizens who are capable of what Plato terms, “self guardianship;” that is people who can control their passions and subsume them to the good of society. Passions can drive men to great heights, great accomplishments, but unguarded passions can cause discord and destruction. They must be controlled for the greater good. Moodie, like Plato, claimed that the rough wilderness of the human heart must be cleared and civilized in order that people could create and participate in a just society. She writes at length on the realization of an ideal society through education. Any moralist who outlines plans for an ideal society is by definition dissatisfied with the present one. Certainly Plato was when he composed *The Republic*. He was saddened by the loss of democracy and the subsequent turn to tyranny in Athens. Thomas More, the political philosopher from whom we get the word *utopia*, was himself frustrated by 16th century English politics when he wrote his most well known book.

4.2 Canadian Utopia

Utopia is the title of Thomas More’s 1516 book of political philosophy. More wrote the book in a socially turbulent era of European history and in it outlined a peaceful, stable, ideal world. The word *utopia* itself is a portmanteau of three Greek words; *eu,* meaning good; *ou,* meaning no; and *topos,* meaning place. In other words, utopia is the good place that is no place. It is a paradox, a better world extrapolated from present circumstances that, of course, can never exist. Moodie, like More and Plato before her, experienced the world around her with profound dissatisfaction and looked to a future golden age that would synthesize the best of England and Canada, leaving behind the unjust and immoral. There is an inherent dramatic element in the void between reality and the ideal, between what is and what prophets like More and Moodie see as what is possible. Moodie was certainly philosophically influenced by moralists like Plato and More, but looked no further than her birthplace for the model of her ideal society. Moodie believes that utopia, or a just society, will

emerge only when its citizens are just. Often citing the dominance of imperial England as evidence, she directly states that free public education is the way to a just city and indirectly shows that discipline and correction through prisons are the best ways to create and maintain the required kind of citizen.

4.3 Britain

When Susanna Moodie writes about Canada present and future she is also writing about England. She cannot get out from under England's influence on her life and views. Linking together numerous indicators throughout the chapters in *Clearing* show that Britain – both the real and the ideal – is Moodie's "ideological viewpoint" (Short 277) or the psychological center of the text. It is the tension between these points – Britain and Canada, actual and utopian – that drives much of Moodie's narrative. As with all great moralists, she cannot abide with what she sees as society's failings.

What is Britain to Moodie? It is quite simply the greatest nation on earth: "The Country is not yet in existence that can present us a better government and wiser institutions than the British" (*Clearing* 333). It is this sort of propagandist hyperbole that British readers would have loved and would have endeared the author to them. Governments and institutions are not merely buildings but people organized, and according to Moodie, it is, "to the wisdom of her educated men, Britain owes the present position she holds among nations" (83). The final illustrative quotation completes the equation: "It is to the moral power of her educated classes that she [Britain] owes her superiority" (84). According to Moodie, Britain's superiority is due to its unequaled development in government, institutions, and moral power through education.

As we have discussed earlier, Moodie was well aware that Britain, although the best country in the world, was not yet utopia. The rigid class system worked well for people with money and power but the difficulty arose when one lacked either of those things, for, "the conventional prejudices that shackle the movements of the members of the higher classes in Britain are scarcely recognized in Canada; and a man is at liberty to choose the most profitable manner of acquiring wealth, without the fear of ridicule and loss of caste" (*Clearing* 13). The problem then is when

people from the lower classes acquire wealth and property without any sense of ‘conventional prejudices that shackle the movements’. How can the power of the ruling class be distributed in such a way to ensure that the right kind of citizens are created?

5. Means: Sovereign power of institutions

James Paul writes that during the political upheavals and mass migrations of the 18th and 19th centuries, “One of the tasks of the State becomes to administer the difference between strangers for inclusion and strangers for exclusion” (33). Traditional societies with sedentary populations did not face this problem. Countries like England had clear class lines and fixed roles largely determined by birth. In immigrant countries like Canada, relationships became abstract. Feudal relationships could not be transplanted into the unfamiliar colonial soil. The nature of social ties had changed and required new mechanisms of socialization. How were new social ties to be formed?

According to one theorist, new social ties were dependent on a new kind of individual. In *Discipline and Punishment*, Michel Foucault writes that during this period, the formation of the individual transitioned from “historico-ritual mechanisms” to “scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms” and “the normal took over from the ancestral, and measurement from status...the sciences of man became possible when a new technology of power and a new political economy of the body were implemented” (193). And we see this is exactly the case in colonial Canada. “Normal” is defined by Susanna Moodie. Far from the traditional displays of sovereignty, power contrives new ways to manifest itself to the individual. Susanna Moodie recognizes this and devotes several chapters to the exercize of power.

5.1 Education

Moodie views public schooling as a powerful civilizing technique: “The want of education and moral training is the only *real* barrier that exists between the different classes of men” (*Clearing* 79). In nineteenth century Britain the situation was quite different but as we saw earlier, Moodie hopes to leave behind the prejudices of the

upper classes while at the same time improving the moral character of the lower classes. She goes on to write: "The man who knows his duty, is more likely to perform it well than the ignorant man, whose services are compulsory, and whose actions are influenced by the moral responsibility which a right knowledge must give" (81). Connecting morality with knowledge, the educated individual will 'do the right thing' better than the ignorant slave. Which type will better contribute to utopia? Measurement and judgment of the effectiveness of education is part of the domain of power as well. Foucault says that, "the school became a sort of apparatus of uninterrupted examination" (186) the purpose of which is primarily to put power into practice and create in the individual an awareness of constant surveillance.

5.2 Kingston Penitentiary

Moodie includes an account of Grace Marks, an immigrant domestic who murdered her employer and his lover in Ontario in the 1840s. It was a sensational case at the time and stands apart from the observational satire that makes up a large part of the book. A closer reading of the chapter reveals that it is the thematic heart of *Clearing* and its narrative contains all of the central tenets of Susanna Moodie's ideology.

The chapter begins innocuously enough with a description of Kingston Penitentiary, at the time and for many years Canada's largest most notorious penal institution. Kingston was also the capital city for a time. Moodie praises the city, noting it, "remarkable for its fortifications, and the importance it ever must be to the colony as a military depot and place of defence" (*Clearing* 189), and, "that it must always be the key of the Upper Province [Ontario], the great rallying point in case of war or danger" (190). The fort serves as the concrete symbol of the supreme physical strength and sovereignty of power.

Moodie visits Kingston Penitentiary, monument to the state's determination to rehabilitate criminals as well as punish them. As we know from earlier accounts, rehabilitation, to restore to civility, is Moodie's raison d'être. She writes of her immense curiosity and hope to see all parts of the place (*Clearing* 190). As was common at the time, penitentiaries were open to the public and such a viewing was not an uncommon way to pass the time. The state wished to display its power over the individual and what better way to invite them on a tour of the very facility.

Unlike forts or other military paraphernalia that are used only in times of conflict or perhaps natural disaster, prisons are the battleground of the state's contention against its own citizens, a conflict without end, and are therefore in constant use.

Moodie enjoys the tour, reveling in the workings of the prison: "I had a long interval of leisure to examine the workshops, where the convicts were employed at their different trades, their sleeping cells, chapel and places of punishment" (*Clearing* 190). We have to assume that it was partially her husband's position as sheriff that afforded Mrs. Moodie such extensive access. Michel Foucault, writing in *Discipline and Punishment*, observes that in the nineteenth century, as industrial progress required more and more labor, pure punishment in prisons gradually reduced and rehabilitation becomes the norm (25). Society requires a docile, compliant workforce and creates mechanisms to ensure this end. The penitentiary is the embodiment of this goal. As the land has to be cleared and leveled before it can be civilized, so too must the inhabitants.

Moodie has nothing but praise for the effectiveness of the prison, not as a deterrent or punishment, but as an institution for socialization:

> The silence system is maintained here, no conversation being allowed between the prisoners. I was surprised at the neatness, cleanliness, order, and regularity of all arrangements in the vast building, and still more astonished that forty or fifty strong active looking men, unfettered, with the free use of their limbs, could be controlled by one person, who sat on a tall chair as overseer...a word or a look from these men [the overseers] was sufficient to keep them at work (*Clearing* 190-191).

Moodie is seeing a near Utopian society in the prison. Here is the full power of the state on display. The very souls of these men appear to have been transformed. It is, to use Moodie's description, truly astonishing. Foucault remarks that this is one of the major effects of what was in the 19th century the new technology of power, the Panopticon ("all seeing"): "hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (201). We see how the prison plays the role not of punishment, but of reprogramming; the inmates are being trained to be constantly

aware of the scrutiny of the state. These are the new citizens for the just society.

People who cannot control themselves to the satisfaction of society will *be* controlled, even at loss of liberty. It is interesting to note that Moodie focuses not on the judicial aspects of the prison, on crimes or punishments of the men, but on their behaviors as social beings during incarceration. Some of these men learn to love their state home so much that they cannot wait to return. Moodie later recounts the story of prisoners who "had grown so attached to their prison that they preferred being there, well clothed and well fed, to gaining a precarious living elsewhere" (*Clearing* 192). Utopia wants the love of its citizens. The people should love the state more than their own freedom, for state goals are their goals.

5.3 Asylum

The third manifestation of power that Moodie offers is the local mental hospital or asylum. Its very architecture projects power and the building itself is a miniature society: "The asylum is a spacious edifice, surrounded by extensive grounds for the cultivation of fruits and vegetables" (*Clearing* 265).

The inmates are largely incurable but nonetheless are not outside the reach of institutional power. Here they live out the remainder of their days, no longer in the hope of reform but merely as objects. Moodie describes her final meeting with Grace Marks, who has become insane, "no longer sad and despairing, but lighted up with the fire of insanity, and glowing with a hideous and fiend-like merriment" (*Clearing* 271). How Marks arrived in this state we will examine in a later section.

6. Characters

With the exception of Grace Marks, we can classify Moodie's characterizations as comic. In this they are shaped by her policy of propaganda. Comic characters are stylized rather than naturalistic. According to Northrop Frye, "stylized figures" are typical of comedy, whose narrative demands override the need for realism in characters (304).

Moodie's characters are presented to us in order to illustrate her philosophies rather than illustrate what actual inhabitants were like. They are the archetypal

comic characters who serve either to block or assist the hero in obtaining her objective. The characters in *Clearing* are not the sinister thieves, drifters and malcontents of *Roughing It,* whose job it was to add color in the form of danger or tragedy to the romance-quest. The denizens of the towns of Ontario in Moodie's sequel are almost out of satire: ridiculous, foolish, and occasionally sympathetic. They are of course in need of civilization, which is ultimately personified in the tale of Grace Marks, a chapter we will examine in detail.

6.1 Stock comic, blocking characters

As the author and narrator of what is an autobiographical confession, Moodie is present as a character in the text. She is the *plain dealer*, the voice of reason, who often outlines the moral norms in society to provide contrast with the other characters and action.

Moodie employs buffoon types throughout the chapters to lighten the mood, provide entertainment. Buffoons are typically foregrounded from setting and other characters by malapropisms or foreign accents (Frye 175). Moodie has characters from Ireland or Scotland speaking in dialect, which she represents orthographically. A Scottish character James says, "Naething for me the night, Bell. I canna' eat; my thoughts will a'run on that puir lass" (Moodie, *Clearing* 229). Short points out that the accuracy of the orthographic representation is incidental because the purpose is not linguistic authenticity but foregrounding for comic effect (51).

Other examples include the travelling preacher and musicians. These harmless itinerants illustrate the kind of citizens who block the progress of civilization rather than contribute to it as a refined, genteel class would. Moodie suffered some criticism from Canadian readers for her portrayals of some of these characters in *Roughing It.* The criticism is not unfounded and there is a sense that she may have pandered to British readership at the expense of a more dignified set of Canadian characters in her accounts.

The mother of Michael McBride (*Clearing* 211-227) serves as the *senexiratus*, the irate parent, who belongs to the *alazons*, or deceivers (Frye 182). The object of her ire is Moodie and what she represents. Mrs. McBride is also passion, old traditions, superstitions and irrationality personified, all characteristics that Moodie

would see eliminated from the Canadian utopia. Mrs. McBride, a superstitious Catholic, unable to control her emotions, rails against her son's conversion to Protestantism and insists that he follow her Catholic traditions as he lay dying. Moodie, the voice-of-reason plain dealer, ends up mediating between the two, converting Mrs. McBride to the point where she becomes simply the mother of a deceased innocent young man, and hence worthy of our sympathy, rather than a hysterical superstitious antagonist who pushes us away. Tellingly, Moodie has Michael speak in Standard English while his mother uses an Irish dialect, further reinforcing their differences despite being mother and son. There is one major exception to the previous list of characters and she is described in the next section.

6.2 Grace Marks

Moodie begins the story of the "celebrated murderess" with a description of one of the victims, a Captain Kinnaird, a retired British officer on half pay who lived on a farm 45 kilometers from Toronto. A common sight in the colonies, British officers could retire with a land grant and half pay if they agreed to stay and develop the land. The deal worked well for both the ex-officers and the British government. The government got rid of possibly bored and restless men who were well trained to do violence and at the same time increased population of disciplined capable men in the colonies. The officers – genteel, educated men – got what was likely unavailable to them at home: land, a steady income, and the opportunity for a new life albeit without the comfort and culture of England.

Captain Kinnaird "had been living for some time on very intimate terms with his housekeeper" (*Clearing* 196). Moodie would naturally disapprove of a man and woman living together out of wedlock and particularly an officer who by virtue of birth and upbringing would be expected to display more principled behavior. As we shall see later on, the Captain is presented in a way that casts doubt on his honor and virtue. The implication is clear: an honorable and virtuous man would never live with a woman he was not married to, especially one below his station as a housekeeper would be. This not only reflects badly on him personally and those of his class, but also puts wrong ideas into the head of the person of lesser status, making them believe that they are socially equal when they are not. This is a

three-part offense in Moodie's worldview: an affront to himself, his peers, and society as a whole. Moodie had berated a gentleman in *Roughing It* for failure to uphold appropriate social boundaries, claiming to do so would make the natives restless as it were (*Clearing* 250). Again, for Moodie, the maintenance of these boundaries is the basis of a civilized, progressive society. Such a man must be flawed, as Moodie will later show. Behavior and character are inexorably linked and unjust behavior indicates an ill-formed character.

Their familiar relationship destabilized the members of the household individually and collectively. The housekeeper, Hannah Montgomery, had become, "very impatient of her formal menial employments," and Kinnaird hired Grace Marks to do all the mundane chores, "that Hannah considered herself too fine a lady to do" (*Clearing* 196). Hannah was quite attractive and now that she had the affections of her handsome officer, pride and impertinence replace her servant's mindset. One socio-moral transgression piles on another, and soon the whole household is irrevocably effected. Hannah's, "insolent airs of superiority aroused the jealousy and envy of Grace Marks, and the man-servant, Macdermott, who considered themselves quite superior to their self-elected mistress" (*Clearing* 196).

Macdermott is of the same type as Kinnaird, but a lower degree. He came from a good family but as a young man could not live under the rule of his parents and went from being a wild boy to a "bad, vicious" man. Not only that he was disloyal, first joining the army and then deserting. He is also weak, coming under the sway of Grace Marks when she expresses her desire to see Hannah dead, having come to both loathe and envy her. Their rebellion grows and they conspire to murder both Hannah and their employer, Captain Kinnaird, take whatever money they can and run off together. Macdermott kills the housekeeper with Grace Marks' help and shoots Kinnaird dead upon his return. They flee as planned but it is not long before they are captured, tried and convicted. Macdermott is sentenced to die and Marks receives a life sentence.

Moodie's narrative picks up with Macdermott talking with his lawyer in his cell the night before his execution. True to form, he cannot maintain proper comportment even in these final moments, when he should be displaying the most dignity: "...his abject cowardice and the mental agonies he endured were too terrible to witness. He dashed himself of the floor of his cell, and shrieked and raved like a

maniac" (*Clearing* 207).

Whatever his past failings, the implication is that he could not even die well as a true gentleman should. Both Kinnaird and Macdermott have failed to, in Moodie's Platonic sense, live just lives. They do not contribute to utopian Canada but in fact, through their inability to live up to the code, destabilize it. Kinnaird's failure to properly relate to his housekeeper enflames the envy and anger of his other employees, and they eventually murder him and his lover. The murderers themselves far overstep their allotted roles in society, imagining in their pride that they are worthy of a far grander station in life.

6.3 Rehabilitation

Moodie provides the narrative of Grace Marks to illustrate the power of the institution to take life – in the case of Macdermott – or to rehabilitate and renew life. In either case the lesson is the same. The state, the crown, has absolute power to give life or take it away from its citizens. According to Moodie, Marks, unlike Mcdermott, has accepted her fate and responded appropriately: "The sullen assurance that formerly marked her countenance, had given place to a sad and humbled expression" (*Clearing* 208).

Marks herself offers continual proof of her repentance: "It would have been better for me to have died with Mcdermott than to have suffered for years, as I have done, the torments of the damned" (*Clearing* 208). Here we see the power of the state to torture not the body but the soul. Macdermott lost his physical life but Marks has had her interior, mental life taken away. What little melodramatic technique Moodie uses in *Clearing* is found embodied in Grace Marks, imbuing her finally with some goodness through self-abnegation (Vicinus 186).

Moodie goes on to write that Marks was an exemplary prisoner, earned early release from incarceration, "due to a petition signed by all the influential gentlemen in Kingston," and became servant to the governor of the Penitentiary. Marks has come full circle, starting right back where she began, in the service of not an officer this time but a governor of a penitentiary. Significantly, it took the imprimatur of the ruling class to allow her this position. Moodie's message is clear and consistent. Power has been redistributed, expanded and repurposed. Rather than crush rebellion

outright or quarantine, plague carriers are to be incarcerated and rehabilitated, essentially having their citizenship revoked until that time when they can show that they are properly socialized.

7. Conclusion

Grace Marks, Kinnaird, Mcdermott, and Hannah, were all revolutionaries, of the same archetype as the Irish immigrants on Grosse Isle or the political dissidents from the 1837 Rebellion. They wanted equality, freedom, not tomorrow and not on any terms except their own. They usurped society's prerogative to dictate class structure, and this, like any revolt, society cannot tolerate. They assumed attributes of the state. This, more than the crime of murder, is what the state cannot abide, and earns its total wrath.

From school to prison to asylum, power holds individuals in a mechanism of objectification. Individuals are measured, compared, judged and organized accordingly. Unlike relatively brief violent reactions to plagues or rebellions, this new mechanism of power is permanent; it lasts the lifetime of the individual, covering his birth, rehabilitation and even insanity. In contemporary civilization the individual is never free of power.

Moodie could never abide with new class structures that were emerging in Canada around her. Whatever pride she had salvaged during her exile from genteel life in England could not survive the loss of respect she had experienced in her adopted country. Susanna Moodie felt that power needed to be reshaped from its traditional patterns in England into something more appropriate for the new populations in the colonies. *Life in the Bush versus the Clearing* provides us with not only an account of the people and places of 19th century Canada, but also a description of the institutions that shaped and civilized new Canadians.

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(Summary)

Susanna Moodie wrote *Life in the Clearing versus the Bush* in 1853 as a sequel to *Roughing It in the Bush*. Also a collection of sketches, the focus this time was on life in the towns in the growing province of Ontario, Canada. While on one level the text does offer portraits of the people and places in 19th century colonial Canada, a closer reading reveals a thematic consistency of wish-fulfillment with its predecessor. Mrs. Moodie's quest to return to the England of her youth still informs her interpretations of both Canada and England. What emerges from the narrative in *Life in the Clearing versus the Bush* is more than a description of city life, but a prescription for a utopia to be brought about with civilizing technologies Michel Foucault calls 'spaces of domination': the school, the asylum, the prison. According to Moodie's narrative, only these constructs can reform citizens who can integrate into the perfect society, individuals like Moodie herself, who live under the indefinite discipline of a trained conscience. Moodie uses comic elements and characterizations in her sketches and this article will also examine their contribution to the aforementioned theme.